**First Unitarian Church of Oakland**

**Minutes of the Board of Trustees Meeting**

**June 28, 2016, 7 P.M.**

*Present:*

*Board Members:* Laurel Egenberger, Micheas Herman, Janet McFarland, Lisa Rosene, Emily Stoper, Claudine Tong, Suzanne Van Houten, Kris Wedding Crowell (Chair)

*Absent:* Rev. Jacqueline Duhart, Michael Fitzhugh, Kenji Oshima

*Visitors:* Therese Jimenez, Ted Rodgers, Linda Propert Sanford, Steve Thomasberger

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m.

Consent Agenda

After a chalice lighting and opening words, the consent agenda was unanimously approved, which meant that the Board acknowledged receipt of three reports (of the Committee on Shared Ministry, the Committee on Board Policies and the Bylaws Task Force) and made two appointments: Suzanne Van Houten as Board Liaison with the Personnel Committee and Noemi de Guzman as a member of the Journey Toward Wholeness Transformation Team.

A multicultural exercise was led by Micheas.

Executive Team (ET) Report

Linda Propert Sanford reported that the ET has not completed the process of setting up a checking account for Stefan Schneider. Bill Blakely is working on preparing the church for an internal audit. Some specific decisions will have to be made about the process before moving to obtain an external audit.

The facilities staff is using the summer to catch up on some delayed maintenance in the electrical system and other parts of the church’s interior, under the guidance of Stefan and Bob Crowe. Concern was expressed about the ivy growing profusely in back of the church and the relative neglect of the church’s exterior. Several people thought it would be helpful to have a House Committee. Lisa mentioned that she has an old House Committee binder that might be helpful.

Treasurer’s Report

A question was raised about how decisions should be made about when groups in the church can use Faithify, a website for raising funds for churches. The consensus was that the Financial Team should develop guidelines, to be approved by the Board, after which the Financial Team should make decisions in individual cases, based on those guidelines.

Board members have received detailed reports on the church budget from Molly Hermes. Lisa added that the capital campaign payments are coming in on track for the mortgage to be paid.

Stewardship Report

Janet is looking for a co-chair. She has access to a lot of valuable records from previous stewardship campaigns. She is seeking ideas for an inspiring theme for this year’s campaign.

Discussion of Board of Trustees Vacancy

After some discussion, Kris said she would ask the Nominating Committee to seek names for the Board vacancy left by the resignation of B Avalon. She will request that they send out a call for volunteers to the whole congregation. She asked Board members to send suggestions to her of people the Nominating Committee should approach individually.

Discussion of Response to Personnel Committee’s Request for Guidance

The Personnel Committee requested clarification of what it means to measure and report employee satisfaction. The Board felt that the committee should decide this. The Board is, in general, interested in the general level of satisfaction and in any underlying problems or patterns that may be causing dissatisfaction – not in a detailed report on each employee. Confidentiality should always be respected. If it should become necessary for the committee to report to the Board on an individual employee, discussions would take place in executive session.

The Personnel Committee also asked about a grievance procedure. Board members agreed that a grievance procedure should be created. Neither the Committee on Shared Ministry nor the Right Relations Committee (which does not exist at present) would be the appropriate body to handle staff grievances. Perhaps the best system would be to create a long list of church members who would be willing to serve on a grievance panel – and then to assemble a new grievance panel, drawn from that list, for each occasion when a grievance needs to be adjudicated.

Discussion of Response to COSM’s Request for Board Priorities

The new Committee on Shared Ministry (COSM) has asked about procedures for reviewing requests for congregational sponsorship of candidates for ministry. The Board strongly suggested consulting with Bev Smrha and perhaps other members of the ad hoc committee that did these reviews last year. It looked over COSM’s draft of procedures and suggested that at least one of the three letters of recommendation should come from a member of the congregation. Although the rules do not require it, there was consensus among Board members that candidates requesting sponsorship from our congregation should have some relationship with the congregation.

In view of its very broad mandate, COSM also requested advice from the Board on how to set priorities. The Board responded that COSM’s focus should be on monitoring the work of the various groups and committees in the church, as well as the clergy, to assess their effectiveness in achieving the mission. But it’s also important to look at issues that are falling through the cracks. For example, what should be done to strengthen the early service? Should we not be working on revisiting “Vision 2012”? What is the function of the Every Member Ministry?

Update on plans for Auction and Holiday Crafts Fair

Suzanne reported that Jodie Mathies and Carol Scott have agreed to run an auction in Spring 2017 and also a holiday crafts fair in December 2016 that will be tied to the auction.

Implementation of the New Board Communication Plan

The Board reexamined the plan, which was submitted in November 2015 but never formally approved or implemented. Several changes were suggested:
Forget about resuscitating the Sower (too much work); publish one longish thoughtful piece every month (either as an addendum to the Chalice Chatter or to be sent out alone); publish a quarterly report of the Board’s activities. Emily was asked to produce a slightly edited version of the communication plan, including these suggestions, which could be attached to every agenda to remind us of our responsibilities to communicate with the congregation.

Discussion of Board’s Charge to JTW; possible appointment of task force to draft a new charter

After considerable digging, Laurel has obtained a copy of the original 2004 charter of the steering committee that eventually evolved into the Journey Toward Wholeness Transformation Team (JTW), which reports to the Board. Laurel will continue to search for other relevant documents. Claudine, who is the Board’s liaison with JTW, will upgrade the charter, with help from Emily, perhaps using material from the UUA website. They will report back to the July or August Board meeting.

Process monitoring was done collectively.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Emily Stoper, Secretary